

Why do I say that? First off, I agree that we should not have a penalty on the marriage. Any two men and women married should not be penalized for being married. But it does not take \$292 billion to repeal the marriage tax penalty. Most economists and accountants will say, no matter how hard we try, we cannot eliminate the penalty, but we can do the best job we possibly can with \$82 billion. That is in the Blue Dog budget. That is what we will support, but not \$292 billion.

I am saying this to alert, to just say to the leadership, if they insist, and I think they will, on continuing to have as the real centerpiece of their economic platform for November of a \$1.3 trillion dollar tax cut, but they also believe that we have to increase defense spending and they also believe we have got to fix health care and they also believe we have got to take care of agriculture's problems and they also believe that we have got to fix Social Security. They cannot do all of those things unless they take a more fiscally responsible position. Mr. Speaker, that is why we take this hour today.

I will say again so that there shall be no misunderstanding by anyone observing or interpreting the vote today. The alternative that the President would have signed and will still sign, as he has stated, would have exempted all small businesses, all small businesses, farmers and ranchers included, up to \$4 million from even having to consider paying the death tax. What is wrong with that? Effective January 1, 2001, not 2010.

If we really and truly want to deal with it in a fiscally responsible way, let us know that the partisan politics is over on this vote, let us roll up our sleeves, then let us see if we cannot put together some, as I said earlier, if the Democratic version is not perfect, let us roll up our sleeves and, for a change on the Committee on Ways and Means, work, Democrat and Republican, to make a better one. But let us make sure it fits within the budget restraints.

To get my vote on any compromise, it cannot be a backend loaded tax cut for death taxes, for marriage tax penalty, for any other tax. It is fiscally irresponsible, in my humble opinion, for this Congress to pass tax cuts that explode in 2010 and afterwards. If we want to do it, do it now. Have that open debate. But do not, do not backend load without first coming to this floor with the Social Security reform bill.

My colleagues will find that there will be bipartisan support, bipartisan support for a lot of the ideas kicking around as long as we are willing to openly and honestly pay for them. The bill that was vetoed today was not openly and honestly paid for. The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

I thank my colleagues for joining with me today, and we look forward to the continuing of this discussion next week and hopefully getting an agree-

ment that will get 218 votes, 51 votes and a Presidential signature, ideally 435 and 100, but that will never happen, Mr. Speaker. But I suspect that we might find one that you and I will agree on.

ISSUES REGARDING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. HOEKSTRA) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HOEKSTRA. Mr. Speaker, I welcome the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. SCHAFFER) who is going to be joining me tonight as we talk about some of the issues that we have dealt with on my subcommittee.

I chair a subcommittee dealing with the oversight issues dealing with the Education and Labor Departments. We are going to kind of take our colleagues through what we have found in our investigations, and some of the things are quite disappointing. On the other hand, there are some things that have been very, very exciting.

Let us start where we should, since we have responsibility for this agency, taking a look at the Department of Education here in Washington. This is a Department that spends approximately \$40 billion per year. It also manages a loan portfolio in the neighborhood of \$80 billion to \$100 billion. So this is an agency that, under its control, has about \$120 billion to \$140 billion. It is a pretty large corporation if it were in the private sector.

Let us reflect back as to what we envisioned for an organization like this. In some ways, it matches what our Vice President AL GORE indicated early in the Clinton administration when he was talking about reinventing government, and that we saw these Federal agencies as representing the best in management practices, mirroring the best in management practices that one finds in the private sector.

If these management practices are in the private sector, it would make a lot of sense for the Federal Government and the agencies within the Federal Government to learn from what is the best practices and incorporate those best practices. I think in many ways that was what the Vice President, Vice President GORE, intended with his assignment to reinvent government.

In 3 weeks we will close another fiscal year. The disappointing thing is that, yes, the Education Department has been reinvented, but under this administration, it has been reinvented into something that none of us can feel very good about. Remember this is an agency that spends \$40 billion on discretionary funds, manages the loan portfolio in the neighborhood of \$80 billion to \$100 billion.

What do we know? We know that, for the year 2000, the Department of Education will again fail its audit. It has

failed its audit in 1998. It failed its audit in 1999. With testimony that we have received in our oversight subcommittee, it is clear that, once again, in 2000, the Department of Education will not have the internal controls, the internal systems in place that will enable it to receive a clean audit.

If that is what the Vice President means by reinventing government, then it is time that we take another look at exactly what this should mean.

When we have got an agency that does not get a clean audit, what does that mean in the private sector? I worked in the private sector, and I worked for a publicly held company. If one is in the private sector and one's independent auditors come in and take a look at one's books, and they indicate to one's shareholders, one's customers and to Wall Street that one's books are not an accurate reflection of what is actually going on in one's business, typically what will happen is the value of the stock will plummet, perhaps even the trading of one's shares will be suspended on the market. One will begin looking for a new chief financial officer. One may also begin looking for a new chief executive officer. Of course one would begin looking for a new person who said we are going to reinvent this company and make it the way that we would like it to perform. That is the private sector.

Why would that happen? This is why companies go through and get an audit. This is why we push to have Federal agencies become auditable. We know that when the books are not clean, and when the systems are not in place, what one is doing is one is putting in place a system of behavior that is ripe for waste, fraud and abuse.

That is why it is so critical in the private sector. That is also why it is so critical in the government sector. Because now approaching its third year of failed audits, what else do we know? Do we see a Department of Education that has the negative with the failed audits but everything else is fine? No. What we find within the Department of Education is a system that is full of waste, fraud and abuse.

Let us also define exactly what the Department of Education is. The Department of Education does not educate any of our kids. Basically what it does is it manages this \$40 billion in discretionary spending. This is money that it sent around the country. It manages this loan portfolio. So basically what it is, it is a bank that distributes taxpayers' money. What we now know under the Vice President's definition of reinventing government it does not do it very well, because the auditors say there is no clear indication that the way that the Department of Education reports its spending actually reflects what happens.

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So it is a bank. It distributes funds; it manages loans. What it does not do is it does not educate our kids.